

the season. This great Oracle of the Forests therefore remarks, that with his consent it should be banished from all curious gardens and avenues, though he acknowledges that for more distant plantations it is desirable; particularly where better timber will not prosper so well, as in places near the sea; it being no way injured by the spray, which is so prejudicial to most trees. The frequent allusions to the Sycamore in Holy Writ, show how much it was cultivated in divers parts of Asia. Zaccheus climbed up into a Sycamore tree to see our Saviour ride in triumph to Jerusalem; and we are told by St. Hierom, who lived in the fourth century after Christ, that he had himself seen this same tree; a sufficient evidence of the length of time which it will stand without decay. It is said of Solomon, among his other meritorious deeds, that "cedars made him to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance," 1 Kings x. 27. In his father David's time, an officer is mentioned as being appointed to superintend "the olive trees, and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains," 1 Chron. xxvii. 28. And the royal Psalmist, in recounting the remarks of the Almighty's displeasure against the Israelites, includes his destroying "their Sycamore trees with frost." It is probably from associations of this kind that it has been planted more frequently near religious edifices than in other situations: indeed, it was little known in England even so late as the 17th century. Chaucer speaks of it as a rare exotic in the 14th century: Gerard, who wrote in 1597, says, "The great maple is a stranger in England, only it groweth in the walks and places of pleasure of noblemen, where it especially is planted for the shadowe sake, and under the name of Sycamore tree." And Parkinson, speaking of the same, in 1640, says, "It is no where found wilde, or naturall in our land, that I can learne, but only planted in orchards or walkes, for the shadowe's sake." At present, however, it is to be found in all parts of the kingdom, and is capable of being made equally profitable and ornamental. The present specimen stands on a gently rising ground, in Cobham Park, and with its graceful and fragrant neighbour—

"The Lime, at dewy eve,
Diffusing odours,"

forms a pleasing object from the windows of the ancient and noble edifice opposite to which it rears its stately head. It measures twenty-six feet in circumference at the ground, and is ninety-four feet in height. Its solid contents are four hundred and fifty feet.

The Lime is perhaps a descendant from one which Parkinson notices at Cobham, the luxuriant branches of which formed three arbours, one over another, which he observes was "a goodly spectacle." It is at present not likely to emulate its predecessor in this respect, rather aspiring to height of stature, than throwing its arms out in the luxuriance which characterizes many of its species; but it is an elegant and flourishing tree, likely to increase in size for many years: at this period of time it measures at the ground above twenty-eight feet in circumference; it is ninety-one feet in height, and contains five hundred and thirty-six feet of timber.

PLATE XXXI.—THE PLANE TREE AT LEE COURT.

THE Plane Tree is of comparatively modern introduction into this country, which is said to be indebted for it to the great Lord Chancellor Bacon, who first planted it at Verulam. He probably procured the seedlings of the species from Sicily, into which island it was transplanted from the Levant, and afterwards spread throughout Italy, of which it has ever since formed the coolest and most refreshing shades. It was held in the highest estimation by the ancient Greeks and Romans. We are told of Xerxes, that finding one of extraordinary beauty and dimensions, he halted his army to pitch his tent under its shade, bedecking it with a golden chain in token of his admiration when he was compelled to proceed; and afterwards causing a golden medal to be struck, engraved with the image of the tree, and which he wore ever after, in remembrance of the pleasure he had felt in reposing beneath its balmy and luxuriant foliage. Among the numerous acts of eccentricity attributed to Xerxes, this is perhaps the only one which can be dwelt upon with any view of placing his character in an advantageous light; as it at least shows him to have possessed a mind originally alive to the beauties of nature, and retaining, in the midst of all his luxuries and excesses, sensibility enough to be affected by them.

Homer mentions a sacrifice under a beautiful Plane Tree, *καλῇ ὑπὸ πλατανίᾳ*. The Philosophical conversations of Socrates are represented as passing under its shade, and the academic groves, at the very mention of which Plato and his disciples rise to the enamoured fancy, were formed of its branches. The Romans thought their most magnificent villas imperfect unless they were sheltered by the lofty and wide-spreading Plane; and the Turks, who treat it with extraordinary reverence, plant it near their dwellings, under the idea that it sheds a